

PERTH AIRPORT

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A night-time photograph of Perth Airport. The terminal building is brightly lit, and several aircraft are visible on the tarmac. A prominent air traffic control tower stands on the right side of the frame. The sky is dark with some light trails from aircraft. In the foreground, there are red lights on the ground.

THE **ULTIMATE** UPGRADE

Western Australia is one of the boom regions of the world, and its capital city Perth—home to 75 per cent of the state’s inhabitants—is the epicentre of its economic growth. Over the next three years, A\$750 million is being invested in improvements to Perth Airport and its accessibility

New domestic pier—construction to commence mid year



With economic growth faltering almost everywhere in the developed world, Western Australia is a good place to be. It's not immune to recessionary pressures but its onshore and offshore resources are underpinning what looks like really sustainable trade expansion. Australia's national economy grew by 2.5 per cent during 2011, outstripping the Eurozone; but according to the *State of the States* report published by CommSec in January 2012, Western Australia is well ahead of all the other states, thanks to its mining boom.

It has the lowest unemployment at 4.8 per cent and its economic output is 28 per cent higher than its 10-year average. The report predicts that Western Australia will continue leading its eastern counterparts in terms of construction activity and business equipment spending over the next 12 months; but how long this happy situation will continue depends on how long demand for Australian iron ore, hydrocarbons and other minerals holds up, warns Brad Geatches, Perth Airport's CEO for the past five years.

Geatches is in a unique position to judge the ebb and flow of Western Australia's trade because most of it passes through Perth Airport. His tenure has already covered a period of enormous growth: passenger numbers through Perth have more than doubled since 2002, to 11.5 million in 2010/11. "The perception," he says, "is that we are in an extended period of investment



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in the resource sector, so we are going to see strong growth over the next few years while that investment is undertaken.”

Geography dictates that civil aviation is the key to Western Australia’s prosperity. Bulk exports are shipped from the Port of Fremantle but anything more portable, from diamonds to people, have little option but to use air services: to reach the nearest regional centre let

alone state capital or overseas destination takes a minimum of two days by any form of surface transport!

Perth Airport covers more than 2,100 hectares. About half the land is earmarked for aviation purposes; one third is used for non-aeronautical property development as it is a critical commercial land supply for the city of Perth and a natural home for transport/logistics companies and many of the service companies that work in the resource sector; and the remainder is set

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“WE ARE WELL CONNECTED BY ROAD WITH THE PORT OF FREMANTLE”



Connecting passengers to the terminals



Checking in

aside for permanent conservation of fauna and heritage sites. There's even a gold refinery there, and it is the natural place to locate oil and gas service companies. "They use the airfreight capacity for high value materials," says Geatches. "Additionally, we are well connected by road with the port of Fremantle. We sit next to the main rail freight hub and in some respects can be seen as an extension of the port, which is land-poor."

The peculiar demands of the resource sector have presented some challenges for the airport. The mines fly their workforce in and out of regional and remote areas, and there is a very strong preference for that activity to happen in very small windows in the early morning, between 5:30am and 7:00am. "We have a high departure peak in the morning," says Geatches. "All the large companies are competing for the same scarce pool of labour. So the rosters the companies offer have to be attractive to the workers. We would love to see them spread their demands to the weekend, for example, but we have not been able to convince them to do that."

The entire sector is an important customer, so the airport has to accommodate it. "We are just one element of a very substantial logistics chain for the mining companies," he stresses. "If we don't fulfil our role and get the employees to the mine site, the draglines don't work and when you are looking at \$140 per tonne of iron ore, the few extra dollars per worker to grow Perth Airport's facilities is not a big consideration."

Currently the domestic terminal that



PERTH AIRPORT

New baggage reclaim area at the international terminal in 2014

serves these customers, as well as the considerable inter-state traffic going through Perth Airport, is located at the western side of the airfield. By the end of 2012 a new \$120 million terminal will be ready at a new location adjacent to the international terminal to the east of the main runway, between that and a planned second runway. Custom-designed for the resource sector by leading architects Hassell, with environmental sustainability at the forefront of design, it is well into construction with local contractor Broad Construction Services. "It is a single level

terminal with a very substantial aircraft parking apron, holding up to 36 aircraft," says Geatches. Passengers will get to the aircraft through covered walkways—busy with frequent arrivals and departures of mainly quite small aircraft, there is no need for expensive air bridges here.

The new terminal will have 16 check-in counters and space for new self-service and bag-drop technology for faster and easier checking-in, three large baggage reclaim belts minimising waiting times, and plenty of parking. In early 2013, Skywest, Alliance Airlines, Air Australia and Tiger Airways

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11.5 MILLION

Perth Airport passenger numbers in 2010/11



International terminal

will relocate to the new terminal. This will significantly reduce activity in the existing domestic precinct, further improving the experience for Qantas and Virgin Australia customers; but above all it will transform the management of currently over-scheduled services for the mining companies. Environmental best practice includes rainwater harvesting and re-use for toilets and gardens, with 2,000 cubic metres of underground storage capacity, underground ducting of ventilation for air-conditioning

to reduce energy use and a sophisticated building management system to reduce energy consumption during operation.

Environmental performance at the airport will be enhanced even more with the commissioning of a new co-generation plant that will use gas to generate electricity and its heat to power the air-conditioning for the domestic and international terminals. The 4MW plant is being supplied as part of the project by Clarke Energy—it will operate 24 hours a day and will provide reliable back-up power during any power cuts on the grid. Geatches says it will massively

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Perth Domestic & International Airport

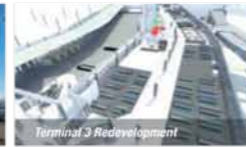
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New Domestic Terminal



Qantas Terminal 2 Redevelopment



Terminal 3 Redevelopment



Terminal 1 Long Term Car Park



Rio Office (ECHO 2)



Domestic Long Term Car Park Expansion



Domestic Terminal Forecourt Works



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Later this year work will start on enhancing the international terminal. Designed by Woods Bagot, the \$300 million expansion will see an expanded check-in hall with 16 additional counters, new check-in and bag-drop technology, a refurbished and spacious departures area and a lot of new food and beverage outlets. The project includes a pier for Virgin Australia, which will move across in 2014. It is all a part of the consolidation of the airport over time into a single precinct.

Improvements on the airfield are matched by changes to air traffic management. Australian airspace is managed by Air Services Australia (ASA), a government corporation. In the vast empty spaces of Western Australia, radar coverage is not practical so ASA is rolling out ADS-B (automated dependent surveillance-broadcasting), a sophisticated GPS-based system that will provide much closer monitoring and tracking of aircraft in the region. "We work closely with Air Services

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Current domestic terminal

"WE WORK CLOSELY WITH AIR SERVICES BECAUSE THERE IS A RELATION BETWEEN HOW THE AIRSPACE IS MANAGED IN AND AROUND PERTH AND THE AIRFIELD CONFIGURATION"

New domestic terminal
under construction



because there is a relation between how the airspace is managed in and around Perth and the airfield configuration,” Geatches says. “The configuration of the runways and the taxiways affects getting the aircraft out and into the sky.”

Between them, the state and federal governments are investing close to a billion dollars on the roads around the airport. This is a necessary complementary development to that of the airport itself, Geatches emphasises. “This is an impressive, indeed a transformational, road upgrade with three-level freeway-to-freeway interchanges. It shows a real determination to invest some of the revenues derived from the mining and gas industries.”

The tender for the expanded international arrivals area closed recently and the successful contractor will be announced in March. Later in the year the tender for the construction of the new domestic pier for Virgin Australia and the international departures expansion will go out. It is anticipated these works will be completed in 2014. In addition, construction will commence on a multi-storey car park in 2014.

Consolidation of all commercial air services to the international precinct will be complete when it is anticipated that Qantas will move across following the construction of a new shared pier at the eastern end of the terminal by 2018. **BE**

For more information about
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